

response. We had loss of life here after the storm because people could not get what they needed as Americans. Here, this same area, President signs a proclamation waiving Davis-Bacon which will allow these individuals in these States, and these communities right here, real people in these counties and the parishes right up here in Louisiana, same place, same President, flying in there, four, five visits, what have you, that are without a prevailing wage, which means a contractor can go in and say, no minimum wage for this job, even though Federal jobs in other parts of the country that are paid for with Federal dollars, paid for, they make a prevailing wage.

It is not a union issue. This is an American issue. We want to make sure that these folks rebuild. Better yet, the \$62.3 billion-and-change that we have appropriated here in this Congress, when it comes down to these individuals receiving a paycheck when many of those jobs have been shut down and some have decided was the final blow for them to move somewhere else will not be able to receive a prevailing wage on the tax dollars that they have given in this area.

That is why we need an independent commission. These individuals, these very real people right here in Hancock County in Mississippi, one of the hardest hit areas here in a FEMA trailer waiting to speak to an operator, I know personally that they were outside for 2 hours waiting to get into this trailer of 10 phones. 10 phones.

They deserve an independent, bipartisan commission to make sure that the Federal response is better, quicker. So this goes far beyond regular order that we say here in the Congress. This is not a committee that has been standing for 50-something years and that is just the way we do business. This is a natural disaster and failure of governance.

And that is where we come in, on the failure of governance side. These are real Americans that are suffering. I ask our Republican leadership, do not allow this institution to do what it is doing now.

Do not split us further by having a partisan committee meet tomorrow because they can, not because it is the right thing, it is because they can. That is wrong.

If we were supposed to be the shining example of government, elected in a democracy, do not allow that to happen. Do not do it because you can. Because I can do things as a grown up, I do not do certain things in front of my children, because it is a bad example. This is a bad example.

And I will tell you that it is far beyond regular order. I am talking to my colleagues in this Congress, and you know exactly what I am saying. This is far beyond, because we are in the majority. That is right. We are supposed to have more people on the committee. This is a natural unprecedented disaster.

And this was a slow response or no response at all. So I say to Members that it is important that we do this. I want to thank, Mr. Speaker, our Democratic leader for allowing us to come to the floor once again.

I want to also say that it is an honor to address the House of Representatives, but this is a very pressing time, not only for our country, but also as it relates to our leadership, and I hope that we can come together and make sure that we have a bipartisan independent commission that the American people are calling for so badly.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 242. Concurrent resolution providing for acceptance of a statue of Po'Pay, presented by the State of New Mexico, for placement in National Statuary Hall, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1713. An act to make amendments to the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000 related to International Space Station payments.

#### U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SODREL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I think I will be joined by some colleagues shortly, I hope.

Congress recently returned to Washington following a busy month of work in the district. For a majority of August, I traveled throughout North Carolina's 5th District and conducted scores of meetings with veterans, teachers, and many other constituent groups.

During this time, I gained valuable insight into the needs of the people I serve and look forward to continuing to address their concerns. The needs of my home district have always been and continue to be my number one priority.

However, as a Member of Congress, it is my duty to educate myself on internal affairs and foreign policy, especially when it pertains to the Middle East. While our foreign neighbors may be far away from northwest North Carolina, our relationships with them affect everyone.

For 1 week in August, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Israel with several colleagues. This educational trip gave me the opportunity to witness how America's national security interests are directly tied to developments in the Middle East, and specifically to Israel's own security.

Strategic cooperation between our country and Israel, in intelligence-sharing, fighting the war on terror, strengthening homeland security, promoting democracy, and increasing technology development is vital to the well-being of my constituents and, indeed, all Americans.

For most of the 1,500 years before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the land of Israel was the independent home of the Jewish people. Since then, it has been occupied by many powers, from the Romans to conquering Arab armies to the Ottomans to the British.

Despite these periods of foreign occupation, there has always been a continuous Jewish presence, and the land of Israel remained the focal point for the Jewish people.

The United States and Israel have long maintained a strong friendship since the modern Jewish state was founded in 1948. In fact, we were the very first Nation to recognize Israel, just 11 minutes after its founding.

Our two countries share much more in common than many realize. We believe in freedom and equality and share many basic rights, such as free elections, a free press, and freedom of religion. We were both founded by people seeking freedom from tyranny, and we both continue to serve today as symbols of liberty in a world plagued by oppression.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to recognize my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT), who has joined me and allow him to share some of his perspectives on this trip that we took in August, and then I will come back to the podium and speak some more.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, last month I was fortunate as a Member of Congress to travel to Israel and witness firsthand the peace process that is currently taking place.

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The trip was a unique opportunity to learn more about relations between the United States and Israel. This country has maintained a longstanding friendship with the Jewish state since its creation in 1948. Today, cooperation between the U.S. and Israel is essential as we fight the war on terror and promote peace in the Middle East. Israel is, has been, and will continue to be an important ally in the goal to spread democracy worldwide and promote peace in the Middle East.

I was privileged to have the opportunity to meet with many high-ranking officials from the region, including Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, as well as Former Prime Minister BiBi Netanyahu and Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres. Talking with these leaders provided me with valuable insight into the ongoing peace process and plans for the region. While their approaches are different, their common goal remains the same: peace and fulfillment of the Jewish homeland.